

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /078 W  
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R 091630Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8924

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0322

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XJ, RH, ZA, SF, PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM AS SEEN BY THE  
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: IN GENERAL RUNDOWN ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN SCENE,  
FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE (COUNSELLOR RACHELE, SUB-SAHARA,  
POLITICAL AFFAIRS) CONVEYED FOLLOWING GOI ASSESSMENT OF  
RHODESIAN ISSUE. IN ESSENCE, GOI FEELS SOME OPTIMISM  
THAT, OVER TIME, PROBLEM MAY BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY  
SINCE RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER IS NOW THOUGHT TO HAVE THE  
NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL.

1. RACHELE, WHO IS WELL INFORMED ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA,  
IMPLIED THAT MUCH OF GOI'S ASSESSMENT STEMS FROM  
INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA AND FROM RESPECT  
FOR PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND FONMIN CHONA AND THEIR  
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SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICIES.

2. DESPITE A NUMBER OF QUOTE NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS UNQUOTE SINCE THE RHODESIAN TRUCE (DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING CEASEFIRE, SLOW RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, PM SMITH'S NEW YEAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF NO DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS FOR 1975, ETC.), THERE IS ROOM FOR OPTIMISM. TIME IS NECESSARY FOR BLACK NATIONALIST AUTHORITIES TO QUIET THEIR MILITANTS. SMITH'S MANEUVERS ARE NECESSARY TO BRING ALONG THE WHITE SUPPORT VITAL TO A SETTLEMENT. KAUNDA IS PERSUADED THAT SMITH QUOTE HAS THE BASIC POLITICAL WILL UNQUOTE TO CONVENE A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF CHANGE.

3. THE CONTEXT IS FAVORABLE. THERE IS TACIT CONCURRENCE AMONG ZAMBIA, PORTUGAL, SOUTH AFRICA, THE ANC IN RHODESIA, AND PROBABLY INCLUDING SMITH HIMSELF, THAT THERE MUST BE A BREAKTHROUGH TOWARD MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. SOUTH AFRICA'S ROLE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT IN MOVING SMITH. EVEN IF NOT THREATENED SPECIFICALLY, SMITH WAS FULLY AWARE THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS WILLING TO WITHDRAW NOT ONLY MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM RHODESIA BUT MIGHT ALSO HAVE ENVISAGED CUTTING TRADE AND RAIL LINKS.

4. SMITH NOW NEEDS ALL THE PRUDENT HELP HE CAN GET. A UNITED ANC WILL MAKE HIS JOB EASIER AND NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO DISCOURAGE ALL RHODESIAN BLACK NATIONALISTS FROM FULLEST COOPERATION WITHIN ANC. NOW THAT THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES HAVE STARTED DOWN THE PATH OF NEGOTIATION, OTHER COUNTRIES SHOULD KEEP HANDS OFF; ONLY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES CAN EFFECTIVELY WORK OUT THEIR FUTURE. BRITAIN'S ROLE SHOULD BE QUOTE SUPPLE UNQUOTE IN THE EXTREME, HOPEFULLY STEPPING IN ONLY LATE IN THE GAME, AS THE LEGITIMATE SOVEREIGN POWER, TO ENDORSE THE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED.

5. RACHELE BELIEVES KAUNDA'S ROLE ARISES FROM A LONG-HELD VISION. IN THE SHORTER TERM THE PRESIDENT FORESEES BENEFITS, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, FOR HIS BLACK BROTHERS, INCLUDING ZAMBIANS. IN THE MUCH LONGER TERM, HOWEVER, KAUNDA HOPES FOR A MULTI-RACIAL SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUOTE COMMUNITY UNQUOTE, WHICH WOULD WORK OUT RESOURCE-SHARING  
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ARRANGEMENTS AND COULD FIND A FORMULA FOR POLITICAL CO-EXISTENCE INCLUDING SOUTH AFRICA. VOLPE

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